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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 8, 2004

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Universal Pre-K Draft Legislation Released in Preparation for Upcoming Special Session

Tallahassee, Fla – Senate President Tom Lee and House Speaker Allan Bense today released a copy of a draft Voluntary Pre-K proposal, a major issue that will be considered during the upcoming Special Session. President Lee and Speaker Bense will be joined by the sponsors of the legislation: Senator Lisa Carlton (R- Sarasota), Representative Dudley Goodlette (R-Naples), and Representative Ralph Arza (R- Hialeah).

“This is a bill we can all be proud of and it establishes a new educational opportunity that will serve our state's four-year-olds well,” said Speaker Bense. “I look forward to hearing from the members of the Legislature and the public next week as we work to make sure this legislation fulfills our responsibility to Florida's children, parents and educators.”

President Tom Lee further added, “Our goal is to achieve early literacy for children in Florida. This proposal establishes a means to accomplish that goal by creating a high quality program, based on strong accountability, and measurable outcomes.”

The proposal released today is one more step in the Legislature’s continuing effort to implement the approved constitutional amendment requiring the Legislature to establish, by the 2005 school year, a voluntary, high quality, free Pre-K program for four-year-olds in the state, which will be delivered according to professionally accepted standards.

The bill provides for 540 hours of instruction, provides parents with a choice of public or private providers, sets educational requirements for teachers, sets goals for higher education degrees for instructors, establishes a maximum class size, and focuses on quality outcomes.

Once the legislation has been filed, it can be viewed on the legislative websites at www.flsenate.gov or www.myfloridahouse.gov

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